

To: PEC-ALL@LISTSERV.GSA.GOV
Subject: Section 508 Compliance Informaiton and Resources

General Services Administration

June 25, 2001

NOTE TO: CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS COUNCIL
PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVES COUNCIL
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS COUNCIL
AGENCY SECTION 508 COORDINATORS

FROM: John Sindelar /s/
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SUBJECT: Section 508 Web Site Resource

As GSA's representative to the Section 508 Executive Steering Committee, I would like to draw your attention to the web site GSA is hosting, www.Section508.gov, to assist agencies in their efforts to implement section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d). In particular, I would like to highlight steps that the Steering Committee is taking to improve understanding of section 508's requirements through this web resource.

Section 508 requires Federal agencies to ensure that their electronic and information technology (EIT) allows employees and members of the public with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data which is comparable to access by those without disabilities. The requirements of section 508 have been implemented through the promulgation of technical and performance standards by the Access Board (an independent Federal agency) and through amendments to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) that will ensure acquisition strategies result in EIT purchases that meet the Access Board standards. The FAR amendments became effective today.

Because many agencies have lead responsibilities under section 508, the Steering Committee was formed to coordinate implementation at a senior management level. It currently includes representatives from GSA, the Access Board, the Departments of Justice and Education, and other agencies. The Steering Committee has been coordinating the development

of several informational documents to help agencies, vendors, and members of the public develop a common understanding of the requirements of section 508. These documents include:

- a consolidated set of acquisition-related frequently asked questions and answers addressing, among other things, the roles and responsibilities of program and contracting officials, requirements definition, steps in the acquisition process, and exceptions to section 508; and
- information on the technical and performance standards published by the Access Board including information about making agency web sites accessible. Access Board information is also available direct at www.access-board.gov.

In addition, to assist agencies in their acquisition planning and market research, the “Buy Accessible” link on www.section508.gov will offer a vendor-maintained product information portal which will facilitate the identification of EIT that meets all or part of the applicable provisions in the Access Board's standards. Additional guidance, including a Section 508 Reference Manual for agency coordinators, is available.

Successful implementation of section 508 requires cross-functional cooperation and coordination within each agency. We hope the resources on www.section508.gov will facilitate a better and broader understanding of section 508 among your respective communities. I therefore encourage you and your agency section 508 Coordinators to make regular use of this web resource and to offer feedback and questions through the addresses noted on the site. (We also welcome suggestions on other useful resources not currently appearing or linked to the site). The Steering Committee looks forward to working with you as together we make the government more accessible to all citizens.